5

Uramikoi.Koi.Uramikoi.

秋夕乃

月と来ると恋。

ウラミコイ、コイ、ウラミコイ。

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ、コイ、ウラミコイ

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

Uramikoi,Koi,Uramikoi.

秋タカ





Uramikoi, Koi, Uramikoi.

CHAPTER 19: THE FLEEING WEASEL AND THE HOUSE CAT

005

CHAPTER 20: THE RAT, THE DOG , THE BOAR, THE CAT, AND SATO-SAN

035

CHAPTER 21: THE RAT SIBLINGS' FIGHT

055

CHAPTER 22: THE RAT, UNAWARE OF ITS HEART

089

CHAPTER 23: THE CRYING OX AND THE CAT

137

CHAPTER 24: THE BATTLE OF THE CAT AND THE OX

171

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

子国恭一
好奇心旺盛な子の当主…だった。
透也との戦いで一度死んでいる。

猫ヶ崎夏歩
恭一を殺すはずの恨み猫だが、好奇心が恭一への想いにつながり協力関係に。

子国宮湖
子家現当主。超強い。

丑蔵朱華
丑家当主。恭一に想いを寄せる怪力少女。

戌原咲直
戌家当主。妖怪に対抗する能力を持つ。

戌原閃
宮湖につく護衛。咲直に能力を譲る。

申々町千恵
咲直とはまさに犬猿の仲。町の蔵書を管理する家。

午坂遥菜
この巻から登場！頼りになるよ。

寅岩虎虎
この巻から登場！

酉寺啓太郎
酉家当主。咲直と千恵の学校の先生。結界系に強い。

辰河勇全
辰家当主。恭一の祖父・郷一の幼なじみ…！

亥山健児
この巻から登場！

鼬塚透也
子国家に恨みを持ち襲撃するも、恭一と夏歩に退けられる。透也を仕向けた黒幕がいるようだが…。

前巻まで 郷一に親を殺され、鼬塚の家をおとしめられた透也は子国家を恨んでいた。そのため、郷一を殺害、恭一までも殺し、さらに宮湖も手にかけようとしたとき、夏歩のキスを受けた恭一が復活し、二人の力により透也は退けられた。その騒ぎで、ようやく起きた現当主の宮湖。その力は…めちゃくちゃつよい!!!

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ、コイ、ウラミコイ。

CHAPTER 19: THE FLEEING WEASEL AND THE HOUSE CAT

NGH... YOU'RE JUST GOOD WITH YOUR HANDS.

I DON'T FEEL LIKE I'LL EVER LOSE TO YOU.

YOU'RE AMAZING, TO-YAN!

ALRIGHT, PERFECT!

BUT WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO YOU?

WHY ARE YOU TEACHING US HOW TO COOK ALL OF A SUDDEN?

Alright, next one!

OH...

WELL,

?

?

BUT DIDN'T YOU SAY YOU'LL BE LIVING WITH YOUR MOM IN THE CITY SOON...?

HUH?

SO I'VE GOTTA COOK MY OWN FOOD.

MY POPS' COOKING IS FREAKIN' TERRIBLE!

AND SINCE SHE LEFT WHEN I WAS A KID, THE ONLY MEMORY I HAVE OF HER IS THAT SHE WAS GOOD AT COOKING.

...WE DON'T KNOW IF WE'LL LIVE TOGETHER...

I'M FINE WITH THE WAY THINGS ARE.

IT'S BEEN JUST ME AND POPS ALL THIS TIME.

DON'T GRAB ME FOR NO REASON, STUPID POPS...

SORRY... SORRY. SO-

OWED HIM?

I GAVE ABOUT HALF TO AZU. I OWED HIM.

AZU (♂)

IT'S A SECRET.

WHAT A HAUL, TOYA!!

ARE YOU BETTER THAN ME NOW?

UGH, SHUT UP!

GAA- AAH.

TO NEVER OWE...

is happy.

Daddy

OH... SO YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO WHAT I'VE BEEN SAYING ALL THE TIME...

YOU CAN HAVE SOMEONE OWE YOU, BUT NEVER OWE ANYONE ANYTHING, RIGHT?

I KNOW ALREADY.

RETURN MY SWORD TO ME.

VERY WELL.

THANKS.

THAT LET ME AT LEAST GET MY MAIN GOAL FINISHED.

FUFU.

DID IT NOW?

AND BECAUSE A YOKAI IS NOT FIT TO BE THE HEAD OF THE NEKUNI,

YOUR GOAL WAS TO KILL EVERY ONE OF HIS RELATIVES AND HAVE KYOICHI NEKUNI BE REBORN AS A YOKAI.

THE ENTITY THAT IS THE NEKUNI FAMILY WOULD DISAPPEAR.

TO HAVE HIM EXPERIENCE THE SAME PAIN YOU DID...

THE PAIN OF LOSING YOUR FAMILY, YOUR RELATIVES.

...YEAH.

...ANYWAY,

ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU FINALLY TOLD ME WHAT THAT SWORD IS?

WAS THAT NOT YOUR GOAL?

AND HOW A LOCAL DEITY CAN HAVE SUCH A POWER.

THE POWER TO TRANSFORM PEOPLE INTO YOKAI,

THIS SWORD IS OF A DISTORTED REALM.

...HM.

VERY WELL, I WILL INDULGE YOU SOMEWHAT...

TO PUT IT SIMPLY,

...DISTORTED?

What?

TO YOU, IT MAY BE EASIER TO SIMPLY CONSIDER IT AS AN EXTREMELY MALEVOLENT SPIRITUAL REALM.

THE MOST SINISTER OF REALMS, A PLACE WHERE THE PHYSICAL AND SPIRITUAL MEET AND ARE TWISTED AND BLURRED.

THE SWORD TWISTS THE BODY AND MIND OF ITS TARGET, BRINGING IT INTO A REALM OF ILL OMEN.

AS YOU HAVE ALSO EXPERIENCED,

YOU WILL WANDER BETWEEN THE CREVICE OF HUMANITY AND SPIRITUALITY, AND THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THEM WILL FADE.

SO WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE HAPPENS WHEN YOUR BODY IS INJECTED WITH SUCH A REALM?

...NOW,

IT IS MY TURN TO INQUIRE OF YOU.

SO THAT'S WHY I FELT SOMETHING EERIE WHEN I PULLED THE SWORD OUT...

BUT BOTH KYOICHI AND YOU MET THEM.

THERE ARE SOME REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS TO OCCUR,

WHY DID YOU FAIL TO EXECUTE MIYAKO NEKUNI?

HAD YOU NOT AGREED TO PARTAKE IN THEIR FARCE,

ONE PART OF YOU I DON'T HATE!

TAKING HER LIFE IN HER SLEEP WOULD HAVE BEEN A SIMPLE TASK.

SO YOU WERE WATCHING ME... SINCE THEN.

ISN'T IT BECAUSE OF YOU? THE OGRES. THE SPIRITUAL INTERFER-ENCE.

DON'T HAVE FRIEN AHAH

AND THE SPIRITUAL INTERFERENCE AND WHATNOT WERE ALL YOUR DOING.

I THOUGHT OUR ALLIANCE WAS JUST THE INITIAL ATTACK.

AM I NOT ALLOWED TO MERELY STAND WATCH?

I WAS MERELY WORRIED...

THE SPIRITUAL INTERFERENCE WAS DUE TO MY YOKAI AURA. IT WAS NOT INTENTIONAL, AND THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD HAVE DONE ABOUT IT.

FUFUFU.

THAT PERHAPS YOU HAD BEEN OVERCOME BY YOUR COWARDICE.

YOU COULD NOT BRING YOURSELF TO KILL GOICHI NEKUNI.

AFTER ALL, ON THAT DAY WE ASSAULTED THE NEKUNI,

I'LL PAY FOR MY MISTAKES.

...NO, I HAVE NO EXCUSES.

THAT'S BECAUSE YOU...

...

AND ONE MORE COWARDLY NEKUNI IS STILL ALIVE.

...

OUR COMMON GOAL

IS TO END THE NAME OF NEKUNI.

THE FAMILY THAT CLOTHED THE ITACHIZUKA FAMILY'S NAME IN SHAME,

THE FAMILY THAT KILLED POPS JUST SO THEY COULD SILENCE HIM, STILL EXISTS.

SO I WILL...

NOW THAT MIYAKO NEKUNI HAS INHERITED THE HEADSHIP, MY GOAL HAS ALSO SHIFTED.

AND FURTHER-MORE.

...WHAT?

NO, I DO NOT REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE ANY LONGER.

A CHILD OF FILTH IS WORTHLESS, AFTER ALL.

GOICHI IS A CRUEL MURDERER, BUT HE CHOOSES HIS TARGETS METICULOUSLY.

MAINLY THOSE WHO BRING HARM TO THE NEKUNI.

...WHAT DID YOU JUST SAY?

FUFUFU.

SO YOU TRULY BELIEVED THAT YOUR FATHER WAS KILLED IN ORDER TO SILENCE HIM.

SUCH AS YOUR FILTH OF A FATHER,

WHO DID NOT KNOW HIS PLACE, AND ATTEMPTED TO USE THE NEKUNI FOR HIS OWN GAINS.

A PATHETIC SCOUNDREL.

HE WOULD CONFRONT ANYONE HE MET IN HIS DRUNKEN RAGES.

YOUR FATHER WOULD OFTEN VISIT THE BROTHELS AND SLEEP WITH ANY WOMEN WHO BORE RESEMBLANCE TO HIS WIFE WHO LEFT HIM, ALL IN SECRET FROM HIS SON.

FUFUFU. AN EXPRESSION OF BEWILDERMENT, AS I HAD EXPECTED.

HE MERELY PRETENDED TO BE A MODEL FATHER BEFORE YOU,

AND HE BROUGHT HIS END UPON HIMSELF IN AN ATTEMPT TO EXTORT MONEY FROM THE NEKUNI... FUFUKUKUKU.

WHAT...

ARE YOU...

WHAT ARE YOU BLABBERING—

AND THE MOST LAUGHABLE OF IT ALL,

FUFUFU,

IS...

THERE ONCE WAS A TINY LITTLE WEASEL THAT BLINDLY BELIEVED IN MY TALL TALE

THAT HIS FATHER WAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY THE NEKUNI FAMILY AND RUTHLESSLY EXECUTED ALONG WITH HIS FAMILY NAME.

THAT'S JUST SO LAUGHABLE, MY...

FUFUFU...

STOMACH IS TEARING UP IN AMUSEMENT...!

FUFU, HYAH HYAH

HAHA HAH

HYAH HIHIHI!

I DON'T GIVE A DAMN

WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT ME...

BUT...

HOW DARE YOU INSULT MY-

WHAT WAS THAT NOW?

da

WAS I NOT THE ONE WHO TAUGHT YOU THE ART OF TRANS-FORMATION?

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD FOOL ME WITH SUCH A SIMPLE RUSE?

K-

NPH-

BUT I DO NOT HAVE AS STRONG OF A SENSE OF OBLIGATION AS YOU DO.

I WAS ABLE TO ENTER THE CITY BECAUSE OF YOU.

I HAVE NO NEED FOR A BEAST WITH ITS TAIL BETWEEN ITS LEGS.

HMM?

HMMMM?

FUFU...

FU...

HM?

I WILL SPARE YOU FOR THAT HUMILIATING AND PITIFUL APPEARANCE.

FUFU FU.

FUFU.

HOW CUTE...

FUFU FUFU.

TO HAVE TO RESORT TO THE FORM THAT YOU DESPISE SO MUCH...

...WELL THEN.

I SHOULD SET OUT MYSELF.

ARE YOU WATCHING FROM THE SHORE OF THE SANZU,

GOICHI?

NOW BEHOLD, AS THE TWELVE CITY YOU PROTECTED

ROTS AND FALLS TO PIECES.

NGH...


FUCK...
FUCK...


FUCK...


THERE ONCE WAS A TINY LITTLE WEASE THAT BLINDLY BELIEVED IN M TALL TALE
THAT HIS FATHER WAS TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF BY THE NEKUNI




...FJCK...



OUT ALONE THIS LATE AT NIGHT..

HACK

YOU SHOULDN'T BE...

YOU'RE BLEEDING.

UH OH, YOU NEED HELP.

OH, I KNOW.

WILL AN AMBULANCE EVEN GET HERE IN TIME...?

WOW, THIS IS TERRIBLE!

GAH...

NGH...

ALONE...

LEAVE ME

JUST LEAVE IT TO ME.

HORSE CLAN CURRENT HEAD

HARUNA MASAKA

I'M IN THE FAMILY HOUSE...?

...HUH?

C-CRAP! IF THEY FIND OUT THAT SHE'S THE HATEFUL CAT, SHE'LL BE...

...!? WAIT, WHAT!? ISN'T THIS THE NEKUNI HOUSE...? WHY IS NATSUHO...!?

OH, IT'S NATSUHO.

PTTTTT...

ZZZ

ZZ

OH...

NNH...?

HEY...!

M... MORNING...

OH. YOU'RE AWAKE, BROTHER?

KYO—

I WAS SO WORRIED,

HAVE YOU HAD BREAK-FAST?

↑ NO IDEA WHAT TO SAY

H-HOW'S EVERY-THING GOING, MIYA?

M-MOR-NING!

AH FAFE... (I HATE...)

MFFOOO!?

AH FAFE... (I HATE...)

...HERE, ARE YOU OKAY?

TH... THANK... YOU...

! YOU KNOW...?

...?

POOR MISS CAT!

KNOCK IT OFF, BROTHER!

FRIENDS...?

SEE?

MISS CAT AND I ARE FRIENDS ALREADY.

YOU DON'T NEED TO GET SO WORKED UP, BROTHER.

LIAR.

EARS POPPED OUT

LOOK HOW CLOSE WE ARE!

EYES BEGGING FOR HELP

SWEATING

SHAKING

STIFF SHOULDERS

122

NGH...

THAT HURT MY FEELINGS...

WHAT'S GOING ON...?

WHA—

HEY! BROTHER, WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SO MEAN?

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ　コイ　ウラミコイ

AT THAT EXACT MOMENT, NATSUHO WAS HAVING

LIAR.

EARS POPPED OUT

LOOK HOW CLOSE WE ARE!

EYES BEGGING FOR HELP!

SWEATING

MAKING

CHAPTER 20: THE RAT, THE DOG, THE BOAR, THE CAT, AND SATO-SAN

SEVERAL DAYS AGO: NEKUNI MAIN HOUSE

SHE WON'T LEAVE HIS SIDE?

A FLASHBACK TO THE PAST SEVERAL DAYS SHE HAD SPENT IN THE NEKUNI HOUSE.

SAVE MEEE!

RITUAL CAT

BUT I KNOW YOKAI GET HUNGRY TOO. I'VE ALREADY MADE A PLAN.

A PLAN?

I GUESS IT'S NOT WORKING...

OH?

THAT'S RIGHT, THE KITTY WON'T LEAVE KYOICHI-SAMA'S SIDE. SHE'S BEEN THERE SINCE LAST NIGHT.

I THINK SHE'S WARY OF US AND ISN'T EATING ANYTHING.

WAS TASKED WITH TAKING CARE OF HER

UM... IS THIS... SOME FORM OF A RITUAL...?

HUH?

HUH?

Have you never had broiled fish head before? It's pretty good

.....

ENCIRCLED BY DELICIOUSLY BROILED LEFTOVERS

DROOLING CAT

MIYAKO-SAMA?

SHEESH, WHAT ARE YOU DOING? TRYING TO TAME HER WITH FOOD LIKE A WILD ANIMAL?

THAT'S SO RUDE!

U-UM...

I-I DONT WANT TO BE RUDE... BUT...

...

U

DIZZY FROM THE SMELL

REMOVAL

I'LL EAT HERE, TOGETHER WITH HER.

BRING MISS CAT THE SAME DINNER AS ME.

OH, WOW. THE RITUAL WORKED.

STAAARE...

YOU.. D-DONT HAVE TO TROUBLE Y-YOUR...

YOURSELF FOR ME...

DROOL

DROOL

DROOL

WARY CAT

HW AH

MI—MIYAKO-SAMA! WE DIDN'T TAKE THEM OUT OF HER FOOD...!

Take them out?

HERE, WHY DON'T WE TRADE? WOULD THAT MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER?

DON'T WORRY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID. WE WOULDN'T POISON YOU.

HWAAH

SHEESH, DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A LITTLE KID! I WON'T DIE OR ANYTHING.

Die!?

SOME-THING'S DEFINITELY INSIDE...!!!

SOME-THING'S INSIDE...!

WARY...!

Sheesh, I can eat peppers!

PEPPERS TAKEN OUT

HAS PEPPERS

WORRIED CAT


SEE, DIDN'T I TELL YOU?
WOW, IT'S SO GOOD...
AND SO THEY TRADED.


I KNEW IT!!! IT DID HAVE SOME-THING!!!
W... WOW.
THIS IS G-GOOD... TOO...
Cough


FIDGET
FIDGET
GREEN PEPPER


NGH
NGH
HNGH!

BUSTED CAT

AS LONG AS YOU'RE HERE, YOU CAN ASK FOR ANYTHING YOU NEED.

NO PROBLEM.

I REALLY... APPRECIATE IT...

GIVING ME... SUCH A GOOD MEAL...

THANK YOU...

FOR THE FOOD.

YOU SAVED MY BROTHER.

I'M

TRULY GRATEFUL.

SHE'S A NICE GIRL.

BUT IT'S JUST A BAD HABIT OF MINE TO JUDGE PEOPLE BY THAT.

...AND BESIDES,

SHE GAVE OFF A REALLY SCARY FIRST IMPRES-SION...

I'M GLAD MY BROTHER HAS SOMEONE WHO LOVES HIM AS MUCH AS YOU DO.

HWEH!?

I SEE.

I CALLED IT.

OH MY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE SO EMBAR-RASSED ABOUT IT

NO—

um... uh...

THANKFUL RAT

LIKE... SOME-THING?

MISS CAT! MISS CAT!

WOULD YOU LIKE SOMETHING?

I... I DON'T KNOW.... I FEEL LIKE SHE'S BEING TOO NICE...? BUT IT'D BE RUDE IF I TURNED DOWN HER GENEROSITY.... HMM...

O... OKAY.

PLEASE, LET ME GET YOU A PRESENT!

DON'T HOLD BACK! OTHERWISE I WON'T FEEL AT EASE.

UM... NO, JUST A BOX...

A... A BOX?

Y... YEAH, JUST A BOX...

HUH? A... A BOX... OF WHAT?

CAN I GET A BOX?

O... OKAY,

WH...
?
WHAT!?

ALL ANIMALS LOVE HER

WHA-
AAA-
AT!!?

My body won't stop!

THEY GAVE ME FOOD...

LET ME USE THEIR BATH, GAVE ME CLOTHES...

THEY ALL SEEM LIKE GOOD PEOPLE,

BUT I'M STILL IN ENEMY TERRITORY, SO I SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS...

CAUTIOUS, CAUTIOUS...

シャキッ

OH? HERE WE GO.

CAUTI—...

NEIGHBORHOOD CAT

THE KITTY MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE IT, BUT SHE'S THE HATEFUL CAT FROM THE FOLKTALES...

MAYBE I SHOULD BE CAUTIOUS OF HER...

LICK LICK LICK

PZZT PZZT PZZT

ZZZ

K

qqqqqh

SHE ACTS JUST LIKE THE NEIGHBORHOOD CAT THAT JUST SLEEPS ALL THE TIME.

She's been sleeping all day.

AW, SHE'S A CAT.

BUSTED DOG

AND...

...I'M NOT CERTAIN, EITHER. I WAS JUST SIMPLY RELEASED FROM THE CELL...

そ…

SO YOU'VE BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON AND REINSTATED AS MIYAKO-SAMA'S BODYGUARD.

YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT IF YOU CAN GO SEE SANA-CHAN.

I get why you're worried, since you'd have to leave your post for a bit

DO YOU KNOW HOW MIYAKO-SAMA AND FUTAYO-SAMA DECIDE ALL THESE THINGS, SEN-CHAN?

WHAT? I HAD NO IDEA...

YOU'RE SO FIDGETY RIGHT NOW!

WELL, YEAH! WE'VE KNOWN EACH OTHER SINCE HIGH SCHOOL KENDO CLUB!

SENPAI... I MEAN, EXCUSE ME. SATO-SAN.

I CAN'T HIDE ANYTHING FROM YOU,

And you can call me senpai while we're on break

COMFY CAT

EVEN THOUGH SHE MUST BE SO BUSY WITH SCHOOL AND SEEING SANA-CHAN DURING THE DAY.

THAT GIRL GREETS ME EVERY MORNING.

HELLO?

GOOD MORNING, MISS CAT. I'LL BE LEAVING NOW.

I DID SAY THAT I'D STAY BY KYOICHI'S SIDE UNTIL HE WAKES UP, BUT...

COMPARED TO HER...

I FEEL SO GUILTY RIGHT NOW...

This is so nice.

Aah this is the life

THEY JUST KEEP... PAMPERING ME...

Snuggle

Snuggle

- SOFT MATERIAL,
- HINOKI CYPRESS SCENT
- REINFORCED STRENGTH
- SPECIALIST-MADE TO ORDER

SCAREDY CAT

AYAKA-CHAN? OH, THE STUPID BOAR.

SOMEONE WANTS TO SEE KYOICHI-SAMA?

Tell me if you need anything

MAYBE I'LL TALK TO HER ABOUT IT... SHE SEEMED NICE...

OKAY...

OH? HE DID THAT TO SEN-CHAN AGAIN TODAY?

DAY AFTER DAY, THAT IDIOT...

I'VE NEVER MET THAT PERSON BEFORE...

THE BOAR?... ONE OF THE TWELVE HEADS?

SO SCARY!

S- SCARY!

WHAT DID THIS BOAR PERSON DOOO!?

ALRIGHT.

OFF WITH HIS HEAD.

NOD

ZZZ

HELP?

I DID THINK ABOUT THIS A LITTLE BECAUSE YOU'RE SLEEPING EVEN DURING THE DAY.

..THAT'S TRUE.

MOMENTS OF SHAME

...AND I FEEL BAD...

I'M... JUST WATCHING KYOICHI... BY MYSELF...

BUT YOU'VE DONE... SO MUCH FOR ME...


THAT YOU'RE SUCH A NEET.



IT MEANS... SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T WANT TO WORK...? THAT'S ALL...

UH...? UM... HUH?

I'm like a meat..?

MEAT...?

I'M... LIKE A MEAT? AM I THAT FAT...?



OUR MEALS COST...

UM, MISS CAT,

Whisper Whisper

I'LL... DO ANYTHING...

B-BUT... I *DO* WANT TO WORK!

Whisper Whisper

AT LEAST LET ME WORK FOR MY FOOD...

SO I THINK IT'LL BE HARD...

!!

!!?

NOPE, EVERY MEAL.

WHAT...? IT COSTS THAT MUCH EVERY DAY...?

BUT IF YOU'LL FEEL BETTER AND IT'S FOR YOUR SAKE,

THEN I HAVE TO TAKE UP ON YOUR OFFER, DON'T I?

OH NO... OH NO...

THEN AS LONG AS YOU'RE OKAY WITH IT, MISS CAT...

...OKAY.

IF YOU SAY YOU'LL DO ANY-THING...

WHAT IS THIS FEELING...?

LIKE I'VE BEEN TRICKED...

UH...

SHE'S SCARY!

WHERE YOU CAN PUT THAT BODY OF YOURS TO USE.

I HAVE A GREAT JOB FOR YOU

KYOICHIIIII...!!

KYOICHI...! PLEASE WAKE UP...!

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ、コイ　ウラミコイ

AND I SENSE SOMETHING WITHIN THE CITY THAT SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

HM... I COME DOWN FROM THE MOUNTAINS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LONG WHILE,

CHAPTER 21: THE RAT SIBLINGS' FIGHT

WHAT HAPPENED, GOICCHAN?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN...?

H— HOLD ON...!

STOP!!

DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE SAYING...?

YOU'RE STILL IN GRADE SCHOOL!

Welcome!

A GREAT JOB WHERE YOU CAN PUT THAT BODY TO USE

HUH?

HUH?

WHAT ELSE *COULD* IT MEAN, OTHER THAN MANUAL LABOR?

RADIATING PURE INNOCENCE

Ahem.

AH... NGH... GWAAAAAH!

...? WHAT'S KYOICHI TALKING ABOUT...?

UM...

PUBERTY

BOOK KNOWLEDGE ONLY

DIRTY MIND

...WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?

AND WHY WOULD YOJ INHERIT THE HEADSHIP OF THE NEKUNI?

ANYWAY, YOU'RE KIDDING, RIGHT?

KYO-CHI...

WHY WOULD NATSUHO, THE HATEFJL CAT, HELP THE NEKJNI FAMILY?

THIS IS SOMETHING I DECIDED AFTER TALKING FOR A LONG TIME WITH MIYAKO-CHAN...

IT'S NOT A JOKE.

I'M GOING TO BE THE HANDS AND FEET OF THE NEKUNI FAMILY,

AND EXTERMINATE THE OGRES IN THIS CITY.

WHAT ARE YOU...

YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP FOR SEVERAL DAYS, SO YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON, BROTHER.

AFTER THE INCIDENT HERE, MULTIPLE OGRES APPEARED IN THE CITY AND ATTACKED PEOPLE.

AND ON TOP OF THAT, THERE HAVE BEEN PEOPLE WHO WERE CUT DOWN BY SOME MYSTERIOUS SWORD USER.

THIS CITY ISN'T SAFE RIGHT NOW.

WE ALSO HAD SOMEONE WHO SAW SOMETHING LIKE A SKANDA.

○10月

*A SKANDA IS A SWIFT-FOOTED GUARDIAN DEITY

LUCKILY, IT JUST STREAKED BY,

AND NO ONE WAS HARMED, BUT...

...

WHAT'S THE PROB-LEM?

BUT AS FOR THE NEKUNI FAMILY, WE'RE IN A BIT OF TROUBLE.

THANKS TO ALL THE HEADS OF THE DIFFERENT FAMILIES WHO STEPPED UP AND DEFENDED THE CITY.

LUCKILY, NO ONE'S DIED SO FAR,

OUR ANCESTORS WERE A LITTLE GREEDY, I SUPPOSE. OUR TERRITORY IS LARGEST OUT OF ALL THE FAMILIES,

AND I'M INCREDIBLY BUSY SINCE I'VE JUST INHERITED THE HEADSHIP.

WE'RE REALLY SHORT ON PEOPLE.

ON TOP OF THAT, WE HAVE TO HELP MISTER BOAR TOO,

SINCE HE'S NO GOOD WITH YOKAI AT ALL.

THAT'S WHY WE'RE GOING TO BORROW MISS CAT'S HELP.

Y... YEAH...

...?

O...

OKAY...

MIYA, COME WITH ME FOR A SEC.

LONELY...

NATSUHO, WAIT THERE.

? BROTHER?

I'D LOVE TO SPEND TIME ALONE WITH YOU AS BROTHER AND SISTER, BUT...

THAT WAS RUDE, BROTHER.

YOU'RE JUST GOING TO USE NATSUHO, AREN'T YOU?

WHAT IS...?

OKAY, I GET THAT YOU'RE NOT JOKING NOW...

...BUT THAT'S JUST WRONG...!!

I SUPPOSE THERE'S NO NEED TO HIDE IT FROM YOU, BROTHER.

AS YOU SAID, THE NEKUNI FAMILY WILL BE USING MISS CAT.

BUT IN RETURN, MISS CAT WILL BE USING THE NEKUNI FAMILY AS WELL.

AND MISS CAT UNDER-STANDS THAT.

OH?

DON'T YOU KNOW, BROTHER?

DON'T TALK LIKE GRAMPS...!

YOU'RE JUST A KID...

NATSUHO KNOWS THAT, AND STILL...!?

I'M THE HEAD.

I BECAME THE HEAD, BROTHER.

THE MARK OF THE EXECUTION OF ENFORCEMENT...!!

THIS

IS SOMETHING I RECEIVED FROM GRANDFATHER IN HIS LAST MOMENTS.

AND JUST THE OTHER DAY, I WAS RECOGNIZED BY GRANDMOTHER FUTAYO AS THE HEAD.

MIYA...! DO YOU NOT UNDERSTAND WHAT BEING THE HEAD OF THE NEKUNI MEANS...!?

OF COURSE I DO. I'VE BEEN WITH GRANDFATHER ALL THIS TIME,

UNLIKE *YOU*, BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T LIKE THE HOUSE.

I WAS *KICKED OUT*...

THEN NOW'S A PERFECT CHANCE.

THE GRANDFATHER WHOM YOU HATED SO MUCH ISN'T HERE ANYMORE,

AND MISS CAT *IS* HERE.

AND AID THE NEKUNI CLAN.

I WANT YOU TO COME BACK TO THIS HOUSE

?
IT GOT-
LOUD ALL
OF A
SUDDEN!

IT WOULD'VE
BEEN NICE
IF I'D HAD A
SIBLING... I
WOULDN'T HAVE
HAD TO PLAY
BY MYSELF...

I GUESS
THEY HAVEN'T
TALKED FOR
A LONG TIME.
THAT MUST
BE WHAT'S
GOING ON...

THEY'RE
TAKING A
WHILE...

ZZZ

STUPID
MIYA!! IDIOT!!
JUST QUIT
ALREADY!

STUPID
BROTHER!!
SAVAGE!!

GO EAT
GRASS ON
A HILLSIDE
WITHOUT
A SIGN OF
CIVILIZATION
IN SIGHT!!

I CAN'T
BELIEVE
YOU HIT
ME!!!

YOU
HIT
ME!!

ARE YOU ALRIGHT, MIYAKO-SAMA?

MMMM

HOLD ON...

H-

I CAN EAT ALL THE GRASS I WANT AS LONG AS I'VE GOT MAYO!

FINE BY ME!

STUPID

BRO-THER...

KYO-KHI...

YOU'RE FAMILY, SO WHY IS THAT...

SHE WANTED YOU TO HELP, RIGHT?

I'M NOT ANGRY!

NO, NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, YOU'RE...

I'M NOT ANGRY.

WH... WHY ARE YOU ANGRY...?

I... YEAH.

YOU JOINED THE NEKUNI OF YOUR OWN FREE WILL, RIGHT?

HJH?

THEN YOU'RE A TRAITOR.

HUH?

HUH?

WELL NOW YOU GET TO EAT BETTER FOOD THAN AT MY PLACE!!

WHA... YOU'RE JUST GONNA RUN AWAY!!?

WHAT!?

YOU'RE SUCH A CHILD!

AND STOP TALKING LIKE A KID...!

I... I DIDN'T BETRAY YOU...!

HEY!

STOP CHASING AFTER ME, TRAITOR!

HE CAN BE SUCH A CHILD SOMETIMES...

SHEESH...!

WHAT!? HOW DARE YOU...!!

THEN WHY DID YOU JOIN SOMETHING LIKE THE NEKUNI FAMILY...

NO!

WERE YOU BRIBED WITH SOMETHING...?

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!!

WAIT, SERIOUSLY?

IT WASN'T HER DIRECT MOTIVATION, BUT SHE CAN'T DENY THAT IT'S RELATED.

UM,

ANYAAA...

What does "anyaaa" even mean!?

THEN WHAT WAS THAT EXPENSIVE-LOOKING CARDBOARD BOX!?

That had to have been yours!

……

BUT HE WAS NEVER MUCH OF A RUNNER...

WHAT THE...? I CAN'T CATCH UP TO HIM?

HUH...?

THAT'S A DIFFERENT STORY... NOW LISTEN TO...

ハァ…

…？

ハァ…

ハァ…

ハァ…

BUT I FEEL SO DIZZY...

フラ…

WH... WHAT'S GOING ON? MY BODY FEELS LIGHT...

WATCH OUT...

...?

WHAT'S GOING ON...?

...? HUH?

HAHA... WHY WOULD I BELIEVE THAT I'M A...

KYOICHI, BELIEVE YOURSELF TO BE A YOKAI.

IT'LL MAKE IT BETTER...

LOOK.

SERI-OUSLY...?

HAHA...

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT?

HA...

AHAHAHAHA...

ON MY HEAD...?

WHO THE HELL DID THIS TO ME...? I'VE BEEN RUNNING AROUND TOWN WITH THIS...

HUH...? I CAN'T TAKE IT OFF...

HUH...? UH OH...

WHAT?

WHAT?

A TYPICAL YOKAI'S BODY

PHYSICAL

SPIRITUAL

A YOKAI'S BODY IS TYPICALLY SPLIT INTO BEING HALF PHYSICAL

AND HALF SPIRITJAL.

BUT IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN THEIR SPIRITUAL BODY, THEY NEED WORSHIP OR FEAR, OR SOMETHING OF THAT SORT.

THEY WON'T GET SICK AS EASILY, AND HEAL FASTER,

THAT'S WHY THEIR BODIES ARE LIGHTER THAN HUMANS'.

THAT'S WHY THE MORE FAMOUS AND FEARED THE YOKAI IS, THE STRONGER THEY USUALLY ARE...

BELIEVING YOURSELF TO BE A YOKAI...

OR BEING FEARED OR CELEBRATED BY A THIRD PERSON.

BUT SOMETHING L.KE THAT... I GUESS.

WELL, IT'S NOT THAT SIMPLE..

SO BE NG BELIEVED IN OR WORSHIPPED GIVES POWER...?

I'D GET SICK OR GET HEADACHES, OR CONVINCE MYSELF WITH A LIE UNTIL IT GOT BETTER.

THAT'S WHY WHEN I DID SOMETHING LIKE REJECT WHO AM I LIKE BEFORE,

WE SHOULD PROBABLY GET OUT OF HERE...

THE AIR HERE FEELS STALE...

BUT I NEVER THOUGHT YOU'D EVEN FAIL AT BEiNG "A HUMAN.

SO I'M A YOKAI...

SO THAT'S WHAT GRAMPS MEANT BACK THEN...

FOSSILIZATION

CRACK

I KINDA REMEMBER BITS AND PIECES BECAUSE I THINK I WAS SEMI-CONSCIOUS...

HMM, I DON'T REALLY KNOW E.TH-

TO BEG.N WITH, HOW DID I EVEN BECOME ONE...?

...BUT EVEN IF I KNOW THAT I'M A YOKAI, I DON'T REALLY FEEL MJCH DIFFERENT...

I... DID... BUT...

I...

HE WAS CON-SCIOUS ...!!?

UM...

UH—

WHAT DID YOU DO?

I THINK YOU DID SOMETHING AND I FELT BETTER RIGHT AWAY...

BUT HOW...?

?

INJECTED?

DRAWING· NATSUHO

YOKAI POWER

B— BASI-CALLY...

YOUR BODY HAD JUST TURNED INTO A YOKA. BUT WITHOUT ANY POWER, LIKE A WATER WHEEL WITHOUT WATER...

WELL. I DIDN'T REALIZE WHAT I DID UNTIL LATER, BUT...

AND GOT THE WHEEL GO.NG...

SO I .NJECTED MY YOKAI POWER INTO YOU...

IF YOU... SAY ANOTHER WORD

I'LL HATE YOU TO DEATH...

OH...

CRICKET CRICKET

O—

OKAY...

O

O

AWKWARD

YOU...

FIDGET FIDGET

Y...

AWKWARD

...I'M SORRY.

I REALLY AM...

YEAH. I HATE YOU...

WAS I REALLY THAT IMMATURE?

ACTING LIKE A SPOILED KID... JUST SAYING WHATEVER YOU WANT...

I... REALLY HATE YOU TODAY...

YOU GET SO AGITATED WHEN... IT COMES TO THE NEKJNI FAMILY.

...WHY DO YOU GET SO WORKED UP?

...NATSJHO,

I DON'T CARE WHAT YOUR REASONS ARE, DON'T HELP THE NEKUNI FAMILY.

THAT CLAN EVEN KILLS PEOPLE.

AND LOOKING BACK AT HOW ANGRY TOYA WAS, YOU HAVE TO WONDER WHAT SORTS OF DARK SECRETS ARE BURIED DEEP UNDERNEATH.

HE TOLD ME TO KILL THE HATEFUL CAT LIKE IT WAS TAKING OUT THE TRASH.

AFTER POPS DIED AND GRAMPS BECAME THE HEAD AGAIN,

THE BAD RUMORS AND MISSING PEOPLE GREW BY LEAPS AND BOUNDS.

BROTHER!

AND NOW MIYA IS THE HEAD OF THAT CLAN... WHEN SHE'S STILL IN GRADE SCHOOL...

AND TELLS ME TO HELP.

OF COURSE I'D GET WORKED UP.

...BUT

ARE YOU GOING TO DO THIS EVERY TIME YOU SEE YOUR SISTER?

IT REMINDS ME OF HOW I USED TO BE, WHEN I'D JUST CLOSE MY EYES AND EARS AND SHUT OUT EVERYTHING.

...ISN'T LIKE YOU.

JUST LASHING BACK AND RUNNING AWAY WITHOUT EVEN TRYING TO LISTEN...

OTHERWISE, YOU'LL END UP REGRETTING IT.

YOU SHOULD TRY TO UNDERSTAND YOUR CLAN, AND YOUR GRAND-FATHER...

IS THERE EVEN SOMEONE LIKE THAT..? OH WAIT

AND SOMEONE WHO'S KNOWN GRAMPS FOR A LONG TIME..

SOMEONE WHO'D TELL ME THINGS...

UNDERSTAND HIM, YOU SAY.. BUT HE'S DEAD ALREADY...

...!

...PULL YOURSELF UP SLOWLY.. GET UP...

SHHHH.. DON'T AGITATE IT..

WHA..? HAFU..?

HEY!

NGH!?



SO THIS IS ONE OF THE OGRES MIYA WAS TALKING ABOUT...!

IT MUST'VE FELT THE STALE AIR AND ENDED UP LATCHING ONTO HERE...

AN OGRE FROM THE MOUNTAINS...

...IT'S NOT ATTACKING US...?

KYOICHI, WALK BACK SLOWLY...

LEAVE THIS TO ME...!

NO... IT'S REALLY AGITATED...

AS SOON AS WE TURN AROUND, IT'S GOING TO ATTACK US!

THAT'S A HUGE BODY...

IF IT CHARGES AT US, WILL I BE ABLE TO STOP IT WITH MY CLAW...!?

HERE IT COMES...!!

DON'T CONCERN YOURSELF, NEKO-GAZAKI.

THIS IS DRAGON TERRITORY.

HO!

HUH...?

WOW.

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, LITTLE KYO.

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.

IF YOU'RE RUNNING AWAY FROM HOME, YOU CAN STAY AT MY PLACE.

ALL I GOT FOR ENTERTAINMENT ARE YOUR OLD GRAMPS' OLD STORIES, THOUGH.

Hey! Who's that?

Who's that?

)))

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ　コイ　ウラミコイ

WHY ARE YOU SO GLOOMY!?

GLOOOOOM

LOOK, LITTLE KYO. I CAUGHT A HUGE...

HAHAAAH!

STAAAAARE

DO YOU HATE HELPING OUT WITH CATCHING DINNER THAT MUCH...?

Need some space?

NO, THAT'S NOT IT...

CHAPTER 22: THE RAT, UNAWARE OF ITS HEART

AHAHA. WE'LL LEAVE IT AT THAT, THEN.

WELL, NATSUHO WAS THE ONE THAT DECIDED FOR US, NOT ME, BUT...

I MEAN, I DO WANT TO HELP CATCH DINNER SINCE YOU'LL BE TELLING US STORIES ABOUT GRAMPS...

IT'S JUST...

AFTER I WOKE UP, SO MUCH CHANGED...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO THINK...

...YOU'RE RIGHT.

I WAS SHOCKED BY WHAT HAPPENED TO GOICCHAN, TOO.

CHANGES ARE HARD TO GET USED TO, NO MATTER HOW OLD YOU ARE.

WE SAW PLENTY OF NATURE ON THE WAY HERE, THOUGH...

HAAH.

IT'LL CALM YOU DOWN.

BREATHE DEEPLY AND TAKE IN THE NATURE AROUND YOU.

ANYWAY, IN TIMES LIKE THIS, YOU SHOULD FIRST CALM YOURSELF AND TAKE SOME TIME.

THERE'S SOMETHING DANGEROUS OVER THERE.

SEE, CALMER NOW, RIGHT?

NO. IT'S DEFINITELY AN EVIL YOKAI TRYING TO EAT US.

LET'S... AVOID EYE CONTACT...

WH- WHAT IS THAT OVER THERE?

ZE- ZE-ZE- ZEN-SAN! ZEN-SAN!

ZE-

HM? ISN'T THAT JUST A SAGARI?

Look how it's head is hanging low.

IT'S A YOKAI THAT WON'T HARM YOU IF YOU LEAVE IT ALONE.

*A SAGARI IS A YOKAI WITH THE HEAD OF A HORSE

I REALLY THINK WE'LL BE FINE IF WE JUST LEAVE IT BE.

UM, NO MATTER HOW YOU LOOK AT IT, IT'S READY TO ATTACK US! LOOK AT ITS EYE!

OR... BETTER YET, LET'S GET OUT OF HE—

BWAA-AAH!!

SHE'S LOST IN HER OWN WORLD, AND LOOKS SO HAPPY...

OH, SHE CAN'T EVEN HEAR US.

WHOOOA! YOU'RE KIDDING ME, NATSUHO!!

ばばば

ぐすっ…

ぐすっ…

WELL, I CAN SEE HOW YOU MIGHT FEEL THAT WAY BECAUSE GOICCHAN HAD A SCARY FACE AND FRIGHTENING PERSONALITY.

Oh, sorry

WHAT KIND OF FACE IS THAT...?

IS THAT THE EXPRESSION YOU MAKE WHEN YOU LISTEN TO STORIES ABOUT YOUR ANCESTORS...?

You should look in a mirror

Is it ready yet?

Is it ready yet?

PRIORITIES...?

HE WAS JUST SO ABSOLUTE WITH THE CHOICES HE MADE,

AND HIS PRIORITIES WERE TOO DISTINCT.

ANYONE WHO SOUGHT TO DESTROY THE TWELVE CLANS OR EXPLOIT THE CITY, OR ANYTHING THAT WOULD BRING HARM TO THEM...

HE ERADICATED THEM ALL WITHOUT LEAVING A SINGLE TRACE, WITH HIS METHODS AS HARSH AS THE ENEMIES WERE FOUL.

THE NEKUNI CLAN, THE TERRITORY, AND THE TWELVE CITY.

AND AS YOU ALREADY KNOW,

THAT OFTEN LED TO BLOODSHED.

...

HEY, L.TTLE KYO...

...SO HE REALLY WAS A MURDERER...

WHAT IF...

IF YOU DON'T KILL THAT GIRL, ALL YOUR FRIENDS WILL DIE WITHIN HOURS.

THAT GIRL, HOWEVER, HAS A GRAVE DISEASE THAT SPREADS TO PEOPLE AROUND HER, ONE AFTER ANOTHER.

IMAGINE THERE'S A GIRL YOU'RE CLOSE TO.

GOICHI WOULD HAVE KILLED HER WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT.

AND HIS KILLINGS WERE JUST CHOICES LIKE THAT, OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

YOU NEED TO CUT OFF HER HEAD WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION.

WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO DO IT?

BUT I ASK THAT YOU NOT THINK OF HIM AS A BLOODTHIRSTY SERIAL KILLER.

OF COURSE, WE'LL NEVER KNOW JUST HOW MANY OR WHO HE HAD KILLED,

Hot!

Hot!

Hot!!

What are you doing?

Slowly

I think it's ready?

HIS RAGE WAS DEFINITELY REAL...

THEY WERE APPARENTLY WORKING TOGETHER IN SOME WAY, BUT THEIR ENTIRE FAMILY NAME WAS ERASED...

...THEN WHAT WAS THE STORY BEHIND THE ITACHIZUKA...?

!

HE KNOWS ABOUT TOYA...?

I SEE... SO HE WAS THE SON OF THE WEASEL CLAN.

THE WEASEL... ITACHIZUKA, HUH? I KNOW OF THEM.

SO HE HEADED OUT TO THE ITACHIZUKA HOUSE WITH A PAYMENT TO END THE RELATIONSHIP.

ABOUT EIGHT YEARS AGO... THE TIMES WERE CHANGING, AND THE AGREEMENT WITH THE ITACHIZUKA WAS NO LONGER NEEDED.

YOU CAN'T FAULT THEM FOR BECOMING UPSET... THEY WERE A FAMILY WHO HAD BEEN OPPRESSED FOR SO LONG.

BUT THE ITACHIZUKA WERE LESS THAN PLEASED.

WAS IT REALLY ACCEPTABLE TO REVEAL TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC WHAT THEIR TERRIBLE ROLE WAS, SOMETHING THAT THEY EVEN HAD TO THROW AWAY THEIR NAME FOR?

THE TALK TOOK A TURN FOR THE WORSE.

THE ITACHIZUKA HAD TURNED INTO A YOKAI AND TRIED TO TAKE GOICHI HOSTAGE.

AND THERE TO THE SIDE, WITNESS TO THE WHOLE THING, WAS THE SON OF THE WEASEL CLAN.

BUT GOICHI'S SERVANT WAS FASTER THAN HIS SCYTHE, AND CUT OFF HIS HEAD.

BUT FOR SOME REASON, GOICHI ALLOWED THAT WEASEL CHILD, WHO KNEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE ITACHIZUKA AND NEKUNI, TO LIVE.

...SO HE'S JUST LIKE ME...

OF COURSE. THEY WERE ONLY BEASTS IN NAME...

HE LET TOYA GO...?

AND YOU SAID HE HAD TURNED INTO A YOKAI...? DOES THAT MEAN THE WEASEL FAMILY WAS ORIGINALLY HUMAN...?

YES...

OF COURSE HE'D COME FOR REVENGE...

IF HIS FATHER WAS KILLED,

AND ACTUALLY WANTED SOMEONE TO COME AFTER HIM...

MAYBE HE FELT GUILT FOR WHAT HE HAD DONE ALL THIS TIME,

THAT'S WHY WHAT HE DID MAKES NO SENSE. IT'S NOT LIKE HIM AT ALL.

EVEN IF HE HAD LET HIM LIVE OUT OF MERCY, IT WAS CLEAR AS DAY THAT HE'D COME BACK ONE DAY SEEKING REVENGE.

JUST HOW MUCH DID HE MAKE HIS OWN GRANDSON HATE HIM...?

NO WAY HE'D BE THAT COMPASSIONATE. YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING ME.

N's eyes are dead

Hahaha haaah

I BET TOYA JUST GOT AWAY..?

HAH! NO WAY!

NATSUHO?

SHE SURE ATE A LOT.

OH?

U... UM...

I ALSO THINK...

HE LET HIM GO....

I ONLY REMEMBER BITS AND PIECES, BUT...

I REMEMBERED WHILE KYOICHI WAS SLEEPING.

ABOUT THE DAY I WENT TO THE NEKUNI FAMILY HOUSE WITH THE WEASEL...

THE WEASEL DIDN'T KILL HIS GRANDFATHER.

THE REASON... PROBABLY HAD TO DO WITH WHAT WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT...

I WAS IN FRONT OF HIS GRANDFATHER, BUT I COULDN'T MOVE.

BUT FOR SOME REASON, THE WEASEL JUST STOOD STILL.

I THINK HE MUST HAVE USED THE NEKUNI ABILITY TO ORDER ME.

YOU... LET ME GO BACK THEN?

AND WHAT I BARELY HEARD WAS...

SO AND...

...WHAT DID THE GEEZER SAY...?

HE SMILED...

AS IF CONFIRMING IT...

Oh?

...

UM... ER...

OH!

AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THAT?

I SEE...

HIS GRANDFATHER SUDDENLY GOT CUT INTO PIECES.

THE WEASEL WAS ALSO SHOCKED.

BUT... BEFORE THAT, A MONSTER WALKED IN.

AND AT THAT POINT, THE ROOM LOOKED JUST LIKE WHEN KYOICHI FOUND US,

AFTER THAT, I LOST CONSCIOUS-NESS...

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS... IT WAS TALKING TO THE WEASEL...

A MONSTER? WAS THAT WHAT KILLED...

I DON'T KNOW HOW TO DESCRIBE IT... IT HAD A FRIGHTENING APPEARANCE...

BUT...

BUT I WASN'T AFRAID...

HOW CAN I BE OF SERVICE?

YES.

SEN?

...ARE YOU AWAKE?

THEY'RE NOTHING ALIKE...

WHY DID BROTHER LEAVE WITH MISS CAT?

IT WAS... MY FIRST TIME TALKING TO HIM IN A LONG TIME...

I...

I'M TERRIBLE... I OWE A HUGE DEBT TO MISS CAT, AND I'M SPEAKING ILL OF HER...

I'M A BAD GIRL.

AND I'M STAYING UP LATE, TOO...

I WAS A DELINQUENT WHEN I WAS YOUNG AS WELL.

I'M A BAD, BAD GIRL....

REALLY?

AND I HID SANA'S BAMBOO SWORD OUT OF SPITE AND MADE HER CRY... AND GREATLY REGRETTED IT...

Waaaah!

Sisteer!

My bamboo sword 's goneeee!

YES. WHEN I WAS YOUNG, MY FATHER DOTED ON SANA,

SO I FELT DISPLEASED.

ALL FAMILIES HAVE THINGS LIKE THAT.

IT'S ALRIGHT...

I'M A MINOR, I CAN'T.

DO YOU WANT A SMOKE? THEY'RE GOOD.

...OF COURSE.

LITTLE KYO, DO YOU STILL HATE GOICHI?

EVEN IF... I DID SOMEHOW LIKE HIM...

ANYONE WOULD GROW TO HATE HIM IF HE HATED YOU THAT MUCH.

WHAT?

BUT YOU KNOW, GOICHI...

...I SEE.

SAID YOU'RE NAIVE, AND CALLED YOU ALL KINDS OF NAMES ALL THE TIME.

HE ALWAYS CALLED YOU A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

I... I SEE... HMM...

REALLY, REALLY, REEEALLY HATED YOU.

BUT THAT WAS BECAUSE YOU RESEMBLED HIS YOUNGER SELF.

YOU EMBODIED EVERYTHING HE THREW AWAY.

AND THAT IRRITATED HIM TO NO END.

N... NO WAY.

THAT GEEZER WAS LIKE ME...?

OF COURSE. CAN YOU IMAGINE BEING *BORN* WITH A SCARY FACE LIKE THAT? THAT'D BE FRIGHTENING.

HE WAS AN ENERGETIC KID A LONG TIME AGO.

I'D SAY HE STARTED CHANGING WHEN HE TOOK THE HEADSHIP.

HE THREW AWAY HIS FRIENDS AND THE WOMAN HE LOVED, AND BECAME THE MODEL NEKUNI.

I'M PROBABLY THE ONLY PERSON HE'D SHARE A DRINK WITH NOWADAYS.

HE'S HUMAN TOO.

HE JUST COULDN'T BRING HIMSELF TO ASSOCIATE WITH YOU.

HOLD ON, WHAT'S THAT NOISE BEHIND...

? DO IT OVER...?

...IT'S TOO LATE.

BUT YOU CAN STILL DO IT OVER.

YOU THINK SO?

IT LOOKS EVEN MORE SINISTER THAN IT DID BEFORE!!

N-N-NO WAY! WE CAN'T JUST IGNORE IT!

JUST LEAVE IT ALONE.

IT'S THE SAME ONE FROM THIS AFTER-NOON.

WE'RE GONNA BE ATTACKED AT ANY MOMENT...

C-C-C-C-CRAP!!

HEY!

LITTLE KYO, DON'T GO NEAR IT.

HUH?

CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ME...?

UHHH... GOOD EVENING...?

ARE...

ARE YOU IN TROUBLE...?

OH? IT WAS A BABY FOX...!

HOW DID YOU KNOW?

ER, BECAUSE...

THESE KIND OF YOKA. ARE USUALLY GUARDIAN SPIR.TS THAT ONLY SHOW UP WHEN YOU'RE COMING INTO THEIR TERRITORY...

BUT HE'S BEEN COMING UP TO JS AND GLARING AT US SINCE THIS AFTERNOON, SO I THOUGHT MAYBE SOMETHING WAS WRONG...

I WAS JUST WONDER-.NG.

OH? YOU GOT SEPARATED?

AND YOU WERE SCARED SO YOL TRANSFORMED TO BE NTIMIDAT NG? YOL CAN'T DO THAT, LITTLE GUY

HE'S TALKING WITH AN ANIMAL...

I'M GOING TO BRING HIM BACK.

...I WAS A BIT WORRIED,

BUT YOUR ROOTS STILL SEEM GOOD.

...?

HEY, LITTLE KYO...

WHETHER YOU ACCEPT WHAT SHE'S DOING OR NOT, A GOODBYE WITH A PUNCH TO THE HEAD IS JUST SO SAD.

SHE MUST HAVE HAD SOME REASON AND CONVICTION TO INHERIT THE CLAN.

YOU SHOULD SEND SOME OF YOUR CURIOSITY TOWARDS MIYAKO AS WELL.


I'D FORGOT-TEN...
THAT I INTERACTED WITH THE GEEZER ON A PERSONAL LEVEL BEFORE DAD DIED.


MOVE, THAT'S MY SEAT.
THE GEEZER JUST AVOIDED ME, BUT NEVER OUTRIGHT HARASSED ME.
GEH.

SO THAT'S WHY YOU'RE SNIFFLING HERE, ISN'T IT.

YOU DID SOMETHING WRONG AND DON'T WANT TO SEE YOUR DAD,

...YOU'RE SO PATHETIC.

GEEZ, WHAT A SAD EXCUSE OF A...

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT.

ROOM FOR ONE PERSON

DAMN IT...

BULL'S-EYE

GH

HNGH

NGH

...LOOK.

I CAME HERE TO DRINK MY SAKE.

THAT'S ALL.

I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT YOU.

HE USUALLY NEVER SAID ANYTHING TO ME, BUT I THOUGHT THE GEEZER TALKED A LOT THAT TIME.

I'M NOT MOVING TILL I'M DONE DRINKING.

I DON'T CARE IF THERE'S A CORNERED RAT NEXT TO ME CRYING IN SELF-PITY.

EVEN AFTER THAT, I SAT WITH THE GEEZER SEVERAL TIMES ON THE OPEN WALKWAY.

I COULDN'T SAVE MY DAD, SO HE MUST HAVE HELD A GRUDGE AGAINST ME.

BUT AFTER DAD DIED, HE NEVER CAME TO SIT NEXT TO ME.

A FAILURE OF A CORNERED RAT IS WORSE THAN A CRYING, CORNERED RAT.

THAT'S WHY EVEN IF I HAD CURIOSITY, I NEVER ACTED ON IT TO PROTECT MYSELF.

IF I COULD FIND A REASON TO HATE HIM AND NEVER HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH HIM AGAIN, I'D NEVER GET HURT.

BUT I CAN'T DO THAT ANYMORE.

SO I'M FEELING REGRET!!

I CAN'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE AGAIN.

THANKS.

AND SHE MUST HAVE A GOOD REASON FOR HAVING TAKEN THE SIDE OF THE NEKUNI CLAN...

SHE STUCK WITH ME AFTER ALL THAT...

...I'M SORRY I SAID ALL THOSE HARSH THINGS ABOUT YOU...

ARE YOU BACK FROM ELOPING?

OH, BROTHER?

.....

...YOU'RE USING THAT WORD WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT IT ACTUALLY MEANS, AREN'T YOU.

HUH? DOESN'T IT JUST MEAN RUNNING AWAY?

UH... Y-YES PLEASE...

WOULD YOU LIKE SOME AS WELL, MISS CAT?

She's hanging onto him.

Here you go~

HERE, SATO MADE SOME TEA.

IT'S COLD, SO LET'S WARM UP BEFORE WE TALK.

GULP GULP

OW! OW!

BROTHER!?

KYOICHI-SAMA! IT'S HOT!!

MIYA!

I'M COMING BACK TO THE HOUSE!


BUT!
WELL, THAT MAKES ME REALLY HAPPY.


OH...


IT'S TO STOP YOU IF YOU EVER BECOME SOMEONE LIKE THE GEEZER.


I SHARE SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOU BECOMING THE HEAD BECAUSE I WAS A FAILURE.
SO...





I'LL BE RIGHT BESIDE YOU, WATCHING YOU.

I WON'T TURN MY EYES AWAY FROM THE CLAN ANYMORE.

I'VE DECIDED.

...PLEASE LET ME HELP YOU EXTERMINATE THE OGRES.

I HAVE TO TAKE RESPONSIB LITY FOR WHAT HAPPENED TO KYOICHI.

ちら…

…

…

I HAVE TO BE BESIDE HIM.

IF I CAN BE WITH KYOICHI BY JOINING THE OGRE EXTERMINATION, I'LL GIVE YOU ALL THE HELP I CAN GIVE!

I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BJT...

I WAS WRONG... THEY REALLY ARE ALIKE.

DOING
...
WAH? MIYA? WHAT ARE YOU
WAH!
IT'S NOTHING.
MIYA...?
?
...I'M SORRY,
MIYA.
I'M HOME.

WELCOME HOME, BROTHER.

MY TREAT.

HERE!

は、

HUH? IT'S NOT FOR THE OGRES...?

THAT WAS AN ADDED EFFECT, BUT NOT THE MAIN GOAL.

THIS CITY'S BARRIER WAS MADE BY GOICHI FOR A SPECIFIC YOKAI.

DID YOU KNOW THIS, KYOICHI?

IT MUST'VE BEEN WHATEVER TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE ITACHIZUKA TO BREAK THE BARRIER,

AND WHAT NEKOGAZAKI MUST HAVE SEEN.

BE CAREFUL.

WHAT *WAS* THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE NEKUNI CLAN AND THE ITACHIZUKA?

OH, COME TO THINK OF IT,

...OKAY

THAT "MONSTER"...

More, please!

I WAS NEVER TOLD WHAT IT WAS, EITHER.

...I DON'T KNOW.

WE WERE DEFINITELY RIGHT TO END THE RITUAL IN OUR GENERATION, GOICCHAN.

THERE WAS AN ANCIENT RITUAL WHERE PEACE WAS GRANTED TO THE HUMANS IN EXCHANGE FOR THEIR LIVES.

HOW DO MAN-EATING OGRES AND HUMANS COEXIST?

THE MOUNTAINS ARE FILLED WITH OGRES WHO'VE LIVED THERE SINCE ANCIENT TIMES.

BUT THERE ARE MANY THINGS SHE'S BETTER OFF NOT KNOWING.

THAT LITTLE KITTY'S LIFE WAS SAVED BECAUSE OF HER CURIOSITY,

I CAN ONLY PRAY THAT CURIOSITY DOESN'T KILL THE CAT.

COME ON! PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, AYAKA!

YOU CAN'T KNOW IF THEY WON'T LET YOU SEE HIM TODAY, TOO!

I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M NOT ALLOWED IN THE HOUSE ANYMORE AND CAN'T SEE HIM. I'M GONNA BE REJECTED TODAY TOO, I ALREADY KNOW IT.

I DON'T CARE. I'M NOT HIS BODYGUARD ANYMORE, I'M NOTHIN'.

HEY!

Say something!

...FINE THEN!

TIME FOR ME TO BUST OUT MY TIGER'S CUB, MY SECRET TREASURE!!

I BOUGHT THESE JUST NOW! THE BEST WAY TO GET HAPPIER WHEN YOU'RE FEELING DOWN IS TO EAT SOMETHING GOOD!

SOUL

TADAAA!

KATSU SANDWICHES FROM THE ONE AND ONLY KILLER-KATSU SHOP!!

KILLER KATSU

KILLER KATSU

CURRENT HEAD OF THE TIGER CLAN

TORAKO TORAIWA

You're such a good girl!

HE'S SO NICE IF YOU JUST TALK TO HIM! HE'S A GREAT PERSON!

BUT WHEN I TOLD HIM THAT IT'S TO CHEER UP A FRIEND, HE MADE A SET FOR ME!

YOU USUALLY CAN'T GET SOME WITHOUT PLACING A RESERVATION FIRST.

AHAHA HAHA...

YOU'RE JUST CALLED AN OX, YOU'RE NOT AN ACTUAL ONE.

OH WAIT,

IF IT WERE BEEF, THAT'D BE CANN.BALISM!

THERE! AREN'T YOU HAPPY THIS WAS PORK?

EHEHE! THESE WERE EXPENSIVE! HERE, TAKE THEM!

HERE, EAT! EAT!

HA...

NO!

IT CAN'T BE...!

BUT HER EXPRES-SION ISN'T CHANGING AT ALL...

SHE'S HAVING SOMETHING SO GOOD STUFFED INTO HER...

...NO...

DON'T DIE ON MEEEEE!

NOOOOO! DON'T DO IT, AYAKA!!!

AH FAFA FAAH... (I WANNA DIE...)

DON'T LEAVE ME BEHIND!!

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ　コイ　ウラミコイ

CHAPTER 23: THE CRYING OX AND THE CAT

HEAD OF THE BOAR CLAN:
KENJI INOYAMA

...SEN. HOW IS KYOICHI DOING?

...YOU'VE COME TO PAY A VISIT TODAY AS WELL, SENPAI?

HE WOKE UP YESTERDAY AND IS NOW IN EXCELLENT HEALTH.

GREAT...!

GOOD FOR HIM...!

YES.

B—

BY THE WAY, SEN...

I'M SORRY, I WILL NOT.

PLEASE GO OUT WITH ME!!

WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME!? WHY DO I CONFESS EVERY TIME I SEE YOU...!?

I'm too busy for such pursuits.

GAAAAAAH! REJECTED AGAAAAIN!!

I SEE.

PLEASE LET ME...

IF KYOICHI IS UP, THEN I CAN SEE HIM, RIGHT?

NO... I MEAN!! THAT'S NOT WHAT I CAME FOR!!

BUT I CAN'T HELP MYSELF! HOW YOU JUST REJECT ME COOLLY AND CONFIDENTLY IS SO ATTRACTIVE, TOO...!

YOU'RE PREPARED FOR WHAT'S ABOUT TO HAPPEN, RIGHT...?

I JUST-

NO-

SA-
SA-SA-
SATO-

SA-

GASP!!!

I BEAT YOU HALF TO DEATH TWO DAYS AGO AND YOU STILL SHOW UP AND BOTHER SEN-CHAN...

NGYAAAAAAAH

RIGHT?

NO...

URP

WHOSE FAULT DO YOU THINK THAT IS...

...WHAT?

YOU'LL MAKE KYOICHI HATE YOU!

COME ON! YOU LOOK MISERA-BLE!

SORRY ABOUT THE TRASH IN THE FRONT YARD. I'LL CLEAN IT UP RIGHT AWAY!

HI THERE, AYAKA-CHAN!

OH MY.

OH! ENOUGH ABOUT THAT! AYAKA-CHAN!

OH... UM... PLEASE DON'T MIND ME...

PLEASE LET ME SEE...

TH-THEN,

WELL... UM...

KYOICHI-SAMA IS NOW FULLY RECOVERED!

KYOICHI-SAN...!

...!

OH, BUT YOU CAN STILL SEE HIM AT SCHOOL AS LONG AS NO ONE FINDS OUT.

AND ON TOP OF THAT, SHE SAID THAT "MISS OX IS NOT ALLOWED EVEN AFTER HE'S GOTTEN BETTER"... I'M SORRY...

...

No!

ACTUALLY, THE NO-VISITORS RULE WHILE HE WAS STILL OUT WAS BECAUSE OF MIYAKO-SAMA...

...

BECAUSE... I'M NOT HIS BODYGUARD ANYMORE...?

HUH?

PEOPLE WILL THINK I'M AN INSANE GUY WHO TALKS TO A CAT...

BUT IF YOU DO THAT...

N... NO...

LET ME AT LEAST TURN INTO A CAT...

LIKE I SAID, YOU NEED TO KNOW THE CITY A LITTLE BETTER, SO I'LL SHOW YOU AROUND.

HEY! LONG TIME NO SEE!

DID YOU COME TO VISIT ME?

...A SECO-

HUH...?

HO-

HOLD ON...

KYOICHI-SAN...!

AYA...

つば

AYAKA ROCKET

NATSUHO-CHAN...?

IS THAT...

OH YEAH, -SHE STILL DOESN'T KNOW THAT NATSUHO IS A YOKAI...

...OH...

THIS IS, UM... UH,

UM! AYAKA-CHA...?

AND SHE'S GONNA LIVE IN THE NEKUNI HOUSE AND HELP OUT WITH SOME STUFF NOW.

A LOT HAP-PENED,

She's transferring to our school and we have to look after her

U— UM,

SHE'S ACTUALLY CONNECTED TO OUR FAMILY,

...A LOT HAPPENED?

I SEE...

I...

I SHOULD HAVE CALLED YOU SOONER.

SORRY... I DIDN'T MEAN TO MAKE YOU WORRY.

BUT I'M FINE NOW.

...I WAS REALLY WORRIED.

I HEARD THAT YOU WERE UNCONSCIOUS THE ENTIRE TIME...

I'M FINE.

DID YOU KNOW? AYAKA COULDN'T STOP THINKING ABOUT YOU!

EVERY NIGHT, SHE'D CALL ME AND TELL ME...

OH HEY, TORAKO...! IT'S BEEN A WHILE!

YO, KYOICHI! HOW'RE YA DOIN'?

Nhyah!

WHAT ARE YOU BEING QUIET FOR?

FWA!?

FU FWAI?

WE-WE NEED TO GET GOING! BYE...!

KYAAAH! STUPID TORAKO!!

OY ONA—

OY ONA SOO KOOIFI FAN!

WAIT, YOU'RE GOING ALREADY, AYAKA?

WHY DON'T YOU STAY AND...

I JUST WANTED TO MAKE SURE YOU WERE OKAY, KYOICHI-SAN.

AYAKA...?

I GOTTA DO SOMETHIN', SO I'LL SEE YA LATER...!

AYAKA, WHEN YOU'RE DOWN, YOU'RE ***REALLY*** DOWN...

SAYS WHO! IDIOT!

HERE, THE DANGO HERE ARE ALL YOU CAN EAT!

COME ON, CHEER UP!

WHO CARES?

ALL CLOTHES DO IS RESTRICT YA!

ANYWAY, AREN'T YOU COLD IN THAT OUTFIT?

BUT NOT LETTING YOU SEE HIM AT ALL? THAT MIDGET HEAD SURE IS STRICT...

WAS CARRIED HERE

NO, NOT THAT "DO IT!"

BRING IT! LET'S DO IT!!

OH? YOU WANNA FIGHT!?

YOU SHOULD BE CAREFUL. IF I WEREN'T COMMITTED TO SEN, I'D PROBABLY MAKE A MOVE ON YOU.

DOES IT MEAN THAT THEY'RE DATIN'...?

WHY DID YOU LEAVE ALL OF A SUDDEN?

...WHAT ARE YOU SCARED OF?

BUT IF YOU DON'T DO ANYTHING, THEY MIGHT END UP THAT WAY.

I DON'T REALLY KNOW,

Azu!

Got it

Make some tea.

NO, DON'T THINK LIKE THAT, YOU'RE NOT HIS MOM.

HIS MO—

I DON'T KNOW IF HE MATURED WHILE I WASN'T WITH HIM OR SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT, BUT IT'S...

...THERE WAS SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT KYOICHI-SAN...

I'VE SEEN THOSE TWO TOGETHER BEFORE...

BUT... TODAY WAS DIFFERENT...

...

I COULDN'T

I LOST MY BREATH AS IF I'D JUST BEEN RUNNING...

MY CHEST REALLY HURT...

BREATHE...

I COULDN'T STAY THERE...

YOU'VE NEVER FOUGHT BEFORE?

HEY, MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE

NAH, FIGHT FOR LOVE!

FIGHT? BUT I FIGHT ALL THE TIME...

Against ogres.

...HUH?

BUT YOU'VE NEVER BATTLED OVER LOVE BEFORE, SO YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, THAT'S IT.

IT'S YOUR FIRST TIME MEETING A LOVE RIVAL AND YOU HAVE TO FIGHT,

CURRY WITHOUT PICKLED VEGGIES OR STIR FRY WITHOUT MEAT. YOU'RE TASTELESS.

RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE LIKE...

I THINK YOU JUST NEED TO KEEP IT SIMPLE, YA KNOW?

...THAT'S TRUE, I'VE NEVER FOUGHT ANOTHER GIRL OVER-A-GUY BEFORE...

ONCE YOU MADE UP YOUR MIND, YOU'D JUST CHARGE STRAIGHT AHEAD WITHOUT A SECOND OF DOUBT.

THAT'S THE FIGHTING BULL I KNOW AND THE AYAKA THAT I LIKE.

HEHEH. THAT'S MORE LIKE IT!

I'M AN OX! NOT A BULL!!

HOLD ON!!

TORA-KO...

...

I CAN HEAR YOU.

DON'T CHARGE STRAIGHT ON BRAINLESSLY. YOU'LL SELF-DESTRUCT LIKE THAT IDIOT OVER THERE.

OH YEAH, BUT ON THE FLIP-SIDE,

IF YOUR OX CLAN HELPS THEM OUT,

WOULDN'T YOU BE ABLE TO BE WITH HIM AGAIN, JUST LIKE BEFORE?

I HEARD THAT THE NEKUNI ARE SHORTHANDED IN OGRE EXTERMINATION BECAUSE OF THE BOAR CLAN.

THAT'S RIGHT!

WE'RE GONNA DROP IN AND GET YOU OGRE EXTERMINATING, AND WE'RE NOT GONNA TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER!

RIGHT NOW!?

.....

MAYBE...!

SEE?

THEN IT'S DECIDED!

WHAT!?

I CAN HEAR YOU, DAMN IT!!

THAT IDIOT OVER THERE IS A FAILURE AS A FIGHTER AND BECAME A DANGO SHOP-KEEPER, AND MADE ALL THIS POSSIBLE.

MAN, IT WORKS OUT PERFECT, DOESN'T IT?

I-IF WE'RE GONNA DO THIS, THEN WH-WHAT DO I...

I-IT'S KYOICHI-SAN...!

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL.

OH.

RING RING RING

FOREVER ALONE

T-TORAKO!? WHAT ARE YOU GONNA TELL HIM...?

GIMME THAT, I'LL TALK TO HIM.

B-BUT I...

AYAKA-CHAN, JUST CONFESS! NO WAY HE'LL REJECT YOU!

GRIN

SHUT UP, FOREVER ALONE!!

PFFT-

PFFF-FFFT-

THAT WE'RE STORMING IN, SO PREPARE YOURSELF.

WAIT, WHAT DID YOU EVEN MEAN BY STORMING IN?

HUH? I DUNNO.

ARE YOU SERIOUS!!?

UH, NO, I JUST GOT OUT OF THE SHOWER.

How rude

PFFFT!

D.D HE REALLY THINK THERE WAS GONNA BE AN ACTUAL STORM...? IS THAT WHY HE HAS A TOWEL...?

PFWA-HAHAH! AYAKA...

HAHA...

COME TO THINK OF IT, SHE'S ALWAYS BEEN TOUGH ON YOU, HASN'T SHE?

IF SHE SAYS SOMETHING, I'LL STAND UP FOR YOU.

IT'S FINE. MIYAKO'S TAKING A BATH RIGHT NOW.

UM... IS IT REALLY ALRIGHT FOR ME TO COME IN...?

SO?

WHAT'S SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU NEEDED TO TALK TO ME IN PERSON ABOUT?

IF THE HEAD GIRL DOESN'T LIKE YOU, THEN LET'S APPEAL TO THE BROTHER'S GOOD SIDE! TELL HIM HOW USEFUL YOU ARE!

Take him down!

GLANCE

UM, UH,

WHAT I WANTED TO TALK ABOUT IS...

APPEAL...

APPEAL...?

I WAS WORRIED ABOUT HOW SHE WAS ACTING EARLIER SO I CALLED... THERE'S DEFINITELY SOMETHING GOING ON.

AND I GUESS FROM LOOKING AT HER, IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT MIYAKO...?

Let's not use that hand gesture

I KNOW.

I'M... HELLA STRONG!

HE KNOWS.

THE MORE I— TALK!!

LAST TIME, I... I EVEN THREW AN OGRE ALL THE WAY TO THE NEXT MOUNTAIN... AND...

HUH... WHAT...?

EVEN IF I CHARGE IN BY MYSELF, I CAN USUALLY EXTERMINATE ALL OF THEM WITHOUT A TRACE...

BUT I TOOK DOWN THE MOST OGRES LAST YEAR...!

I... I MIGHT NOT LOOK LIKE IT,

THE LESS ATTRACTIVE I SOUND...

I... EVEN HEARD THAT... SOME OGRES DON'T EVEN WANNA COME OUT BECAUSE..

OF HOW SCARED THEY ARE.. OF ME..

I WAS GONNA DO THAT ANYWAY!!

WHY DON'T YOU JUST ASK HIM DIRECTLY?

NOT GOOD. I DON'T GET. WHY, BUT AYAKA'S MORALE IS PLUMMETING...!

AYAKA...!

VOLUN-TEER? BUT...

I TOLD YOU EARLIER...

WH— WHAT I'M TRYING TO SAY IS...

SO THEY DON'T REALIZE SHE'S GONNA BE HELPING WITH THE EXTERMI-NATION...

OH, THAT'S RIGHT. THEY THINK NATSUHO IS JUST AN ORDINARY GIRL.

I HEARD THAT YOU WERE SHORT ON PEOPLE FOR OGRE EXTERMINATION, SO I CAME TO VOLUNTEER...!

THANKS FOR YOUR OFFER, AYAKA.

BUT WE'RE NOT SHORT ANYMORE.

...SORRY.

C

I...

I UNDER-STAND.

SORRY TO BOTHER YOU...

H— HEY! AYAKA!

AREN'T YOU GIVING UP TOO SOON?

I WANT TO TELL HER ABOUT WHO NATSUHO REALLY IS...

BUT NATSUHO TOLD ME NOT TO TELL HER SO...

I DON'T WANNA BE SELFISH AND CAUSE TROUBLE FOR ANYONE...

...THERE'S ALSO THE ISSUE WITH OUR FAMILIES.

CAPTURED

!?

REALLY? I CAN'T IMAGINE HER DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT.

SHE'S TAKING A BATH TOGETHER WITH MIYAKO AND SEN-SAN.

Bath!

♪Bath!

OH.

That's it. We're done for today.

C— COME TO THINK OF IT,

WHERE *IS* NATSUHO-CHAN?

WELL, SHE STILL TRIES TO RUN AWAY AND STUFF, BUT,

SHE'S TRYING HARD ON HER OWN, TOO!

LAST TIME YOU SAW HER IT WAS REALLY BAD, BUT SHE'S GOTTEN SO MUCH BETTER!

Y... YES.

YOU'D THINK SO, RIGHT?

WHEN I SEE HER TRYING SO HARD, IT MAKES ME HAPPY TOO.

OH, AND WHEN I TOOK HER INTO THE CITY TODAY,

SHE...

...WHY?

TOGETHER WITH NATSUHO-CHAN...?

WHY ARE YOU...

AYAKA...?

NO...!

THAT I CAN'T BE YOUR BODYGUARD ANYMORE, BUT...

I... I KNOW...

I JUST SAID I'M NOT GONNA BE SELFISH...

SO A BODYGUARD ISN'T ALLOWED...

NATSUHO-CHAN'S...

JUST AN ORDINARY GIRL, ISN'T SHE...?

I'M NOT HERE TO SAY STUFF LIKE THIS...

THAT'S...

THAT'S...

BUT A CUTE, ORDINARY GIRL IS OKAY...?


NOT FAIR...

DOES SHE THINK THAT BECAUSE TO HER, NATSUHO IS JUST A GIRL WHO CAN'T FIGHT...?

NOT FAIR...? WHAT IS SHE...

BUT NATSUHO SAID SHE DOESN'T WANT HER TO KNOW...

SO SHE THINKS HER SPOT WAS TAKEN BY NATSUHO FOR NO REASON...

THERE'S STILL A CHANCE THAT THEY MIGHT RUN INTO EACH OTHER SOMEHOW AND START FIGHTING, AND I DON'T WANT THAT EITHER.

NO, THIS IS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY. I'M GONNA EXPLAIN IT TO HER CLEARLY.

DON'T RUN AROUND SOAKED LIKE THAT!

LET'S TALK JUST BETWEEN THE TWO OF US OUT—

AYAKA,

SORRY, NATSUHO. BUT I'M...

HERE, LET ME WIPE YOU DRY...!

FINE! BUT YOU'LL CATCH A COLD IF YOU DON'T COME BACK, EVEN IF YOU ARE THE HATEFUL CAT!

N-N-NO! I CAN'T DO IT! I CAN'T TAKE A BATH WITH OTHER PEOPLE YET...

THERE, KITTY! GOTCHA!

WAH!

HUH?

THAT CAT...

CRAP...

THOSE FOOT-STEPS ARE...!!

I... I'LL DO IT MYSELF...

PLEASE... THANK YOU...

HUH...

WHAT...?

NATSUHO-CHAN IS...

THE HATEFUL CAT...!

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ　コイ、ウラミコイ

WHAT YOU HAVE THERE

IS A WEAPON FOR SPARRING MADE BY MISTER ROOSTER.

Is this really a paper knife.?

IT DOESN'T HURT AND IT'LL DISINTEGRATE INTO PAPER ONCE YOU'VE TAKEN A STRIKE, SO IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE.

BUT A STRIKE WHILE USING AN ABILITY IS STILL DANGEROUS, SO THAT'S NOT ALLOWED.

THE WINNER IS WHOEVER SCORES THE FIRST STRIKE OR SUBDUES THE OPPONENT.

WHAT!?

YOU'RE GROUNDED WHILE MISS OX IS WITH MY BROTHER AND GET SCRAPS FOR MEALS FOR A WEEK?

AS FOR MISS CAT, HMM...

IF YOU WIN, YOU CAN ASSOCIATE WITH MY BROTHER, BUT IF YOU LOSE, YOU'RE NOT ALLOWED IN HERE ANYMORE.

LET'S GET STARTED!

CHAPTER 24: THE BATTLE OF THE CAT AND THE OX

YOU'VE BEEN... FOOLIN' ME ALL THIS TIME...!

HOW DID THIS HAPPEN...?

SORRY, WE SHOULD HAVE TOLD YOU SOONER...

BUT NATSUHO ISN'T DANGEROUS, AND...

HOW CAN I BELIEVE THAT...?

WHEN YOU'RE A GUEST IN ONE'S HOME, YOU SHOULD DO AS YOUR HOST SAYS.

MI... MIYAKO-CHAN...

AREN'T YOU NOT ALLOWED IN HERE TO BEGIN WITH?

SO YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO TRUST US, MISS OX.

BESIDES, MISS CAT IS ONE OF US. SHE'S GOING TO HELP US EXTERMINATE THE OGRES WITH MY BROTHER.

B... BUT I'VE FOUGHT THE HATEFUL CAT TWICE...

I WON'T ALLOW YOU TO LAY A FINGER ON THE PEOPLE OF THE NEKUNI.

I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS JUST HOW FEARSOME SHE IS...

I CAN'T LET YOU DO IT...

IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS...!

IT WAS WHEN I WAS GOING BERSERK...

SHE WAS A MONSTROUS CAT THAT TRIED TO KILL KYOICHI-SAN...

AYAKA...

THIS ISN'T GOOD...

...NNNGH...

I CAN HELP...

IF IT'S OGRE EXTER-MINATION...

I'LL DO EVERY-THING...

DING

NNNNGH... WHAT DO I DO... HMM...

BUT JUST TELLING HER "NO!" IS ONLY IGNORING THE PROBLEM...

IF I LEAVE IT UP TO MISS CAT AND BROTHER, THEY'D PROBABLY SAY SOMETHING LIKE "LET'S ALL DO IT TOGETHER!"

ALRIGHT, I'LL GIVE YOU A CHANCE, MISS OX.

IF YOU REALLY WANT TO HELP US EXTERMINATE THE OGRES,

THAT YOU'RE MORE CAPABLE THAN MISS CAT.

PROVE TO ME

NGH!
THIS IS
HARD...!

NGH...

SHE'S
GETTING
WAY UP
CLOSE TO
ME...!

SHE DODGED IT...? WHAT REFLEXES...!

WAH!

SO THE MONSTROUS CAT IS HER TRUE IDENTITY AFTER ALL?

BUT NOW, SHE'S FIGHTIN' ALL-OUT IN FRONT OF PEOPLE.

BACK AT THE MALL, NATSUHO-CHAN WAS JUST A SHY GIRL...

OH MAN.

I'M SO NERVOUS.

...BUT...

AND I REALLY DON'T WANT TO FIGHT AYAKA-CHAN.

I... I'VE NEVER HAD THIS MUCH ATTENTION ON ME BEFORE.

UNDIVIDED ATTENTION

If I had a box, I'd hide in it right away.

AND I DON'T WANT ANY WEIRD SPECIAL TREATMENT, EITHER.

IT'S NOT REALLY BAD FOR ME IN ANY WAY RIGHT NOW OTHER THAN ME NOT BEING USED TO THE FEELING.

WH... WHY?

PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE THAT I BECAME A YOKAI.

SEN-SAN CAN PROBABLY TELL FROM THE SMELL... SO, IS SHE JUST NOT SAYING ANYTHING ABOUT IT?

GLANCE

I DON'T WANT ANY MORE PEOPLE TO WORRY ABOUT ME.

BUT I'VE MADE UP MY MIND TO STAY BESIDE HIM.

I HAVE TO BE HIM

SO I'M SORRY, AYAKA-CHAN,

IF I HURT YOU, I'LL APOLOGIZE WITH ALL I'VE GOT AFTER...!

...MIYA...

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

MISS CAT DEFINITELY LOOKS MOTIVATED.

← SHE GOT CHANGED

NGH...

IF YOU WERE ABLE TO MOVE, YOU'D JUMP IN TO STOP THEM, WOULDN'T YOU?

SHE LOOKS LIKE SHE'S UP TO NO GOOD...

IF I CAN MAKE MISS OX SUFFER A DECISIVE LOSS, SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO SAY ANYTHING ANYMORE.

Nfu fufu...

AND I WANT TO SEE FIRSTHAND JUST HOW SHE FIGHTS.

MISS CAT MIGHT BE SHY, BUT SHE'S THE FABLED HATEFUL CAT, SO SHE'S NOT GOING TO LOSE TO MISS OX.

WHY ARE YOU HAVING THOSE TWO FIGHT...?

GO, GO, MISS CAT!

THAT'S HER FIRST TIME FIGHTING WITH A WEAPON... SHE HAS NO COMMUNICATION SKILLS, BUT HER FIGHTING PROWESS IS UNMATCHED...!

NATSUHO-CHAN

IS SERIOUS.

AND THE NATSUHO-CHAN THAT I PLAYED WITH IS THE REAL HER?

SO WHAT IF THAT MONSTROUS CAT FORM WAS SOME KIND OF A MISTAKE,

BUT SHE DOESN'T HAVE THAT FRIGHTENING AURA OR OVER-WHELMING PRESSURE.

FIGHTIN' HER...

I DON'T KNOW HOW I SHOULD BE

INFIGHT! INFIGHT!

OH COME ON!

Don't you have it mixed up?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, AYAKA...!?

..UNDER-STOOD.

KEEP AN EYE ON THE TIGER.

SEN.

THERE'S NO REASON FOR IT.

JUST LET THEM BOTH HELP. WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT...?

MIYA, STOP THE FIGHT ALREADY.

NOT TAKING OUT SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T BELONG HERE ANYMORE ONLY HURTS THEM IN THE LONG RUN.

WOULD STOPPING THE FIGHT REALLY BE BETTER FOR MISS OX?

YOU JUST DON'T HAVE THE GUTS TO CHOOSE ONE OF THEM.

BROTHER,

NNGH!

AND NATSUHO-CHAN'S MOVES ARE GETTIN' FASTER AND FASTER!

MY ATTACKS CAN'T EVEN SCRATCH HER!

...!

ALL I CAN DO IS JUST KEEP PARRYIN' AND STOPPIN' ATTACKS THAT WOULD GET HER THE WIN.

IF I DON'T DO SOMETHIN', I'M GONNA LOSE.

I'M GONNA BE OVERWHELMED BY HER SPEED SOONER OR LATER.

OH.

IN-THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT...

BUT THERE'S NO WAY FOR ME TO DO THAT...

IF I CAN JUST FIGURE OUT WHO NATSUHO-CHAN REALLY IS,

I'D BE ABLE TO FIGHT HER WITHOUT HESITATIN'...!

I WANTED TO FIGHT WITH EVERYTHING I HAVE... BUT...

...!

AYAKA-CHAN IS ACTING LIKE SHE'S DISTRACTED...?



?

LET ME ASK YOU SOME-THIN'....

...NATSU-HO...

CHAN...

DO YOU LOVE KYOICHI-SAN?

WH... WHAT ARE YOU...

YES.

THIS IS WHO NATSUHO-CHAN REALLY IS.

OH NO.

AM-I STUPID? THIS ONLY MAKES IT HARDER TO FIGHT...

IT'S OVER...

BUT

EVEN THEN...

MY BODY KEEPS MOVING.

MY HEART IS ON FIRE.

IT'S BEATING LOUD AND CLEAR.

BLOOD IS RUSHING THROUGH MY BODY.

I'M SLOW AND I ALWAYS TAKE ROUNDABOUT WAYS.

THAT'S THE FIGHT NG BULL I KNOW AND THE AYAKA THAT I LIKE

ONCE YOU MADE UP YOUR MIND, YOU'D JUST CHARGE STRAIGHT AHEAD WITHOUT A SECOND OF DOUBT

IT'S JUST LIKE TORAKO SAID. IT'S SIMPLE.

WHAT'S MY ANSWER?

THE GIRL IN FRONT OF ME

LOVES KYOICHI-SAN.

IT'S SIMPLE.

WON'T LOSE TO ANY-ONE'S!!!

MY FEELIN'S FOR KYOICHI-SAN

TAKE THIS!

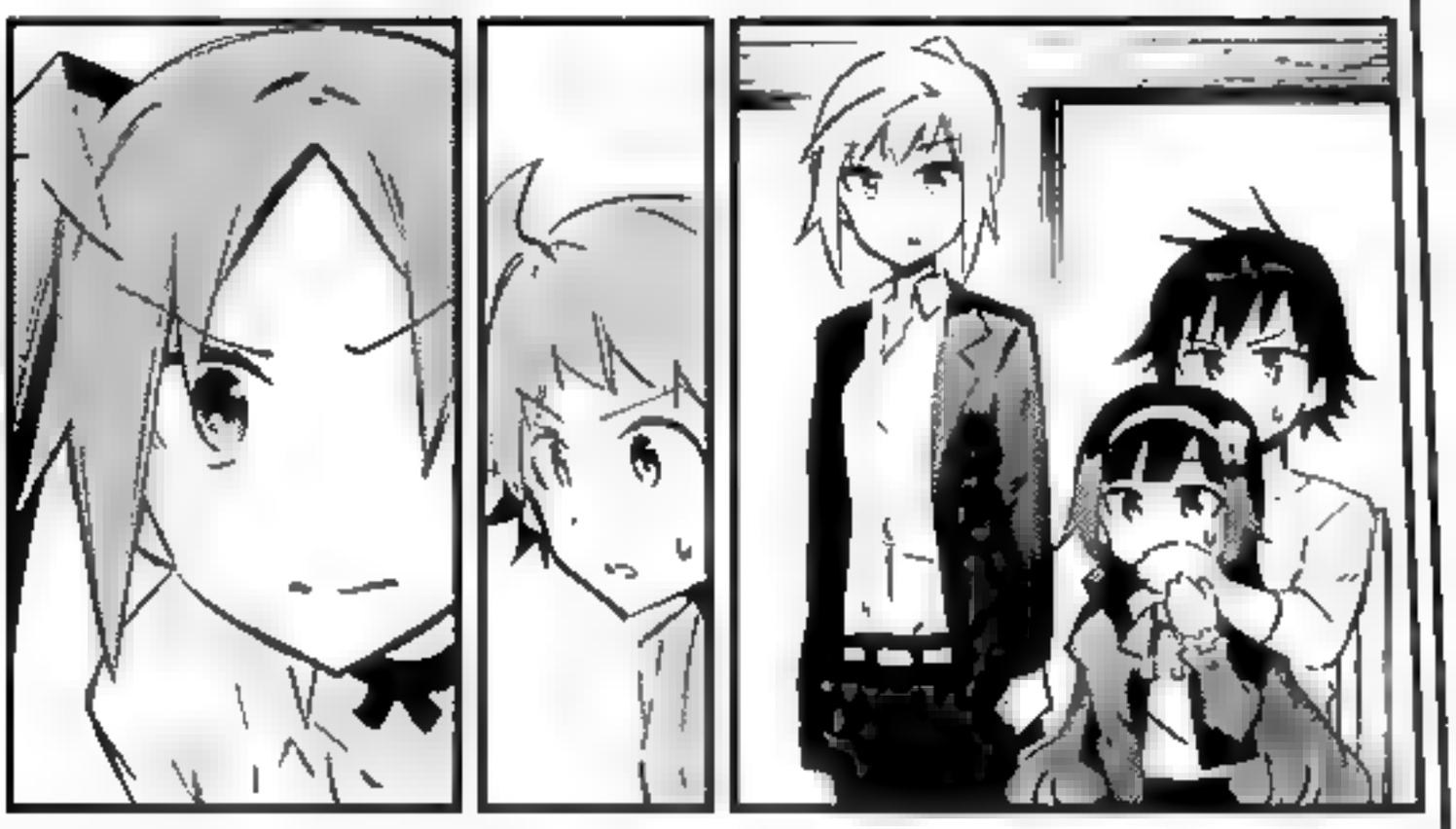
FWAH!

ABILITIES ARE DANGEROUS! YOU CAN'T US–

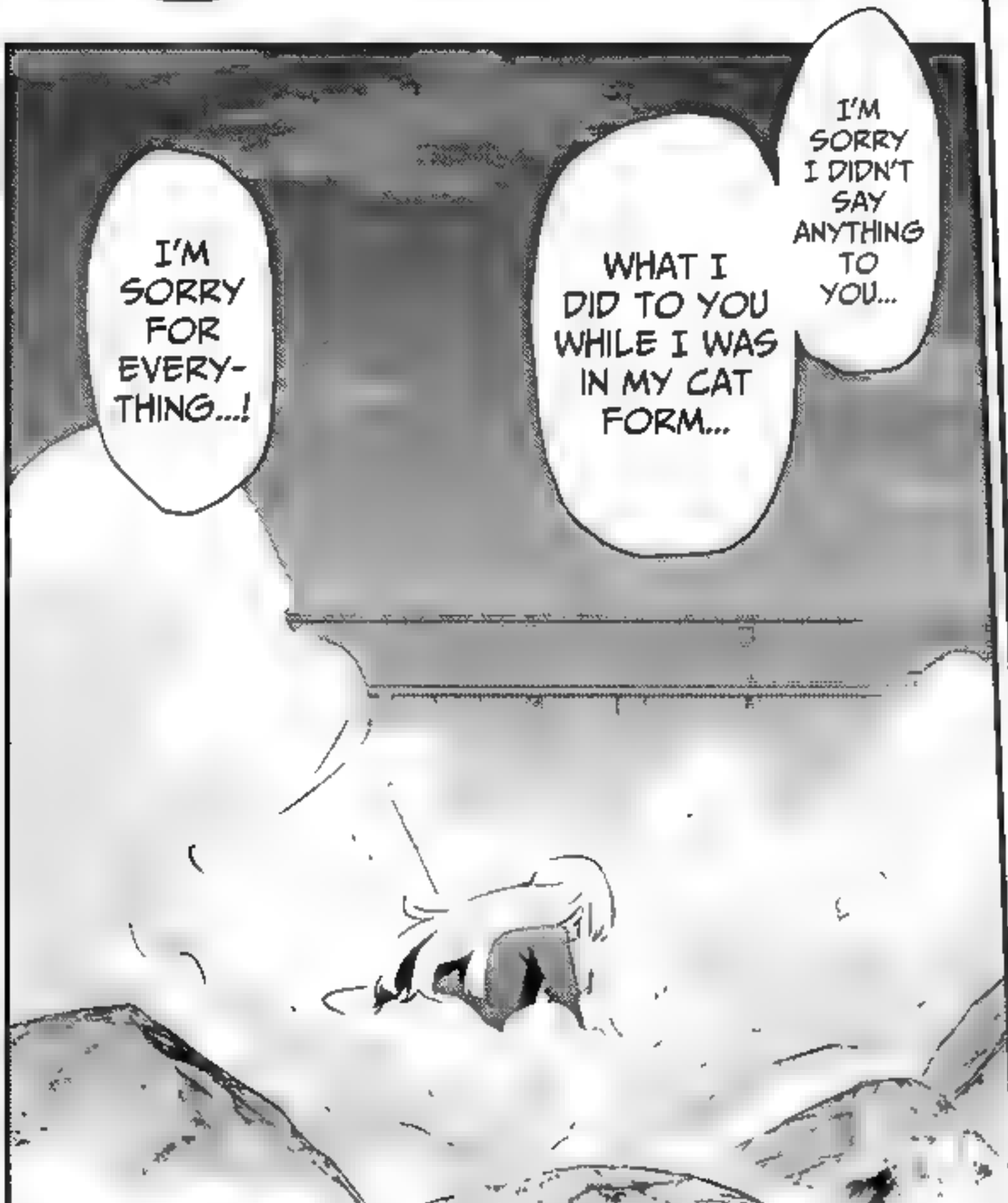
HEY!

SHAT-TER!!

EARTH




I'M SO SORRY... AYAKA-CHAN...
I'M SORRY...


I'M SORRY FOR EVERY-THING...!
WHAT I DID TO YOU WHILE I WAS IN MY CAT FORM...
I'M SORRY I DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO YOU...

I'M SO SORRY...!

I WAS REALLY HAPPY...

THAT YOU'D EVEN PLAY WITH ME...

YOU CAN HIT ME...

PLEASE, JUST DON'T HATE ME...

WHAT ARE YA TALKIN' BOUT?

HA HAA WUU FUUIN...

HWA-HAYAHA-HYA-

NACCHAN?

YOU ALREADY KNOW THAT I LOVE CATS, DON'T YOU?

BUT...

AND YOU MIGHT HAVE THE UPPER HAND ON ME,

I can't hear what they're saying

LOOKS LIKE I LOST MY PLACE AS A HELPER FOR EXTER-MINATING OGRES,

UH...

HER NICKNAME FOR ME WHEN I'M A CAT...

...!

I WON'T LOSE KYOICHI-SAN TO YOU!

OKAY...!

SHE OUTRIGHT CHEATED! ARE YOU BLIND!?

W-WAIT, SATO!!

DRAW!

STRIKE

DOWN

MIYA...

WHAT DOES... A DRAW...?

NGH!

SHE USED AN ABILITY, BUT IT WASN'T TO HURT HER OPPONENT...

SIGH... ALRIGHT. BECAUSE IT'S A DRAW, I'LL MAKE A COMPRO-MISE...

YOUR BAN ON ENTRY IS LIFTED.

MISS CAT WILL HAVE PRIORITY IN THE OGRE EXTERMINATION ROLE... BUT YOU CAN HELP US OUT OCCASIONALLY...

And I don't want the yard messed up any further

OF COURSE I'D BE WARY OF HER.

WELL, EVERY TIME SHE CAME IN HERE, SHE'D ALWAYS BEAT YOU TO A PULP.

Oh, you see, back then

INSTANT DEATH AT FIRST SIGHT

† KYOICHI

WHY WAS SHE NOT ALLOWED INSIDE IN THE FIRST PLACE!?

B—

BUT IF YOU HIT MY BROTHER AGAIN, I'LL KICK YOU OUT WITHOUT A SECOND THOUGHT...

...OKAY!

...BUT SHE WAS SO DETER-MINED...

AND SHE'S EARNED MY RESPECT... SO IT'S FINE.

BROTHER? WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

WHAT?

KYO-
KYO-
KYO-
KYO...
AYAKA...!
GREAT...!
!?
ABA-
AAA-
AAA-
AAR-
GH!
KYOICHI-
SAAAAANN!!
I DID ITTTT!!
AYAKA ROCKET
WH...
WHAT
DID I JUST
SAAAA-
AAAY!?

...BY THE WAY, WHAT ARE YOU GUYS EATING?

I GOT SOME-THING TO DO.

YOU SHOULD EAT WITH US.

YOU'RE GOING BACK ALREADY?

YOU ARE ALL SAVAGES! SAVAGES!

I... I CAN'T DO IT! I CAN'T DO IT!

Why did you ask?

WAAA-AAAH! STOP! I DON'T WANNA HEAR IT!!

JAPANESE BEEF SUKIYAKI.

BUT IT'S GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH ME, ANYWAY.

I KNOW MY PARENTS' GENERAT.ON HAD SOME PROBLEMS WITH THE NEKJNI,

IF IT WEREN'T FOR YOU, TORAKO...

IF YOU HADN'T BROUGHT ME HERE...

THANKS.

JUST TREAT ME TO SOMETHING NEXT TIME.

AND WE'LL INVITE MASAKA, TOO.

AHAHAHA! STOP IT, THAT TICKLES!

TORA-KOOO-OO!

WE'RE COUSINS, AREN'T WE?

IT'S NOTHING.

...HEY,

JOINING ON YOUR PATROL IS THE LEAST I CAN DO.

YOU COVERED THE DOG CLAN TERRITORY WHILE I WAS OUT.

IT'S FINE.

YOU JUST GOT BETTER, DIDN'T YA? YOU SHOULD BE RESTIN'.

GO SMASH CYMBALS SOME-WHERE OR SOME-THING, CHIE.

I SEE... THANKS, 24-HOUR K9 PATROL UNIT.

DID YOU HEAR THAT?

!!?

YEAH!

THAT'S THE ONE WE'VE BEEN HEARING ABOUT...!

DON'T SAY STUFF LIKE THAT. YOU'RE RAISING SOME FLAGS...

...HEY,

YOU'RE GOING TO GET HURT ONE DAY IF YOU'RE JOKING AROUND ALL THE TIME.

GWAAAA

NGAA-AAH...

IT HURTS. IT HURTS!

STOP RIGHT THERE!

YOU AIN'T PULLIN' ANY OF THAT IN MY TERRI-TORY!

YOU'RE THE WANDERING SLASHER, AREN'T YA!

HUH...?

A DUAL-WIELDING SWORDSMAN...?

H...

HELP ME

THE WAY THAT SWORD FEELS...

AW MAN...

WHERE HAVE I....?


BUSTED.

恨み来、恋、恨み恋。

ウラミコイ　コイ　ウラミコイ

THE SUDDEN LONG WEEKEND

MIYAKO-CHAN IS SO EXCITED...

IS IT THAT GREAT OF A PLACE?

YAAAAY! LET'S GO! LET'S GO!

IT'S A LONG WEEKEND!! LET'S GO TO NEZUNEY LAND!!

M-MISS CAT! AREN'T YOU EXCITED!?

AND SINCE IT'S A LONG WEEKEND, IT'S GOING TO BE CRAZY CROWDED!

EVERY ATTRACTION HAS A TON OF PEOPLE! YOU HAVE TO WAIT AT LEAST THIRTY MINUTES FOR EACH ONE OF THEM!

IT'S A SUPER POPULAR AMUSEMENT PARK!

OH NO, THAT'S RIGHT! IT'D BE TOO MUCH FOR NATSUHO!! CANCEL THAT IDEA!!

EXCITED...

I-I-I-I-I- I'M... SO...

UH... YES.

WAAAH!! MIYAKO PASSED OUT FROM THE SHOCK!!

WHAT DO I DO?

CANCEL...

KYOICHI BOUGHT A TON OF GOODS FOR MIYAKO AFTER THIS.

And his wallet died.

あとがき

五巻になりましたよ。
VS透也がひと段落しましたが十二町動乱編に突入です。
新キャラなどもりもり出ますので(もう出てるけど)
どうぞお楽しみに～。
作者側だと増えたら増えたで
各キャラエピとか描きたくなるのが悩みどころ…
ひとまず我慢。

スペシャルサンクス

武田ルイ様
田部井悠記様
三崎祐輝様
担当Y本様
&読者の皆様方





「恨み来、恋、恨み恋。」Uramikoi, Koi, Uramikoi. 6

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※単行本発売時のまま収録しています。